

Transition Planning Questions & Answers

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A. IEP FORMS & MONITORING

A1. What is Indicator 13?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires states to report data annually on 20 indicators related to compliance and performance of students with disabilities. The 13th Indicator relates to transition services for students: **“Percent of youth age 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals”** [20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)]. The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) has developed an OSEP-approved checklist to evaluate the transition planning components of the IEP. You can find it at:
<http://www.nsttac.org/?FileName=indicator13>.

The DESE Compliance is monitoring IEPs from school districts to report the state’s level of proficiency in meeting Indicator 13. During the first year of the fourth cycle of MSIP (06-07) the DESE used a checklist that was very similar to the NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist with the addition of one question, “Was the student invited to/attend the IEP meeting?” During 07-08, the second year of MSIP, the DESE is only monitoring items listed on the NSTTAC Indicator 13 checklist. This checklist will also be used during the 08-09 school year.

A2. How do I learn more about the state sample IEP form and Form C?

The new state sample IEP is available at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/Compliance/IEP/Index.html>. The DESE provided training on the form in December 2007 and an online Ask the Expert event will be held on the Missouri Community of Practice in February 2008. Sample completed IEP forms with Form C are also available on the Community of Practice.

Also available is the DESE Special Education Division Webstream Training Series Fall 2007. The Webstream for postsecondary transition is available at:
<http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/Webindexpostsec.html>. There is also a list of resources at this site including handouts and weblinks.

B. TRANSITION ASSESSMENT**B1. When is consent required for transition assessment?**

The consent requirements for transition assessment are not any different than the consent requirements for any special education assessment. Please refer to the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual. Indicator 200.60 specifies the times when consent is not required to collect certain data. 200.60 states that agencies are not required to obtain parental consent for teacher and related service provider observations, for ongoing classroom evaluations, or for administration of or review of the results of adapted or modified assessments that are administered to all children in a class, grade or school.

B2. Is there ever a time when consent is not required to conduct a formal assessment?

Consent is not required when the assessment is administered to all students in a class, at a grade level, in a school district building or district-wide unless consent is required for all students participating in the assessment.

B3. When is a reevaluation required for transition assessment?

Reevaluation is triggered in the same way for children with transition plans as it is for any child with an IEP. When the IEP team decides that they do not have the appropriate information that they need to write a child's IEP, and individual assessment is necessary to obtain the information, then a reevaluation should be started for the child. The team then reviews existing data, decides what additional information is needed and how they are going to get it. While reevaluations are required every three years, they can and should be conducted more often if the IEP team decides that they do not have the appropriate information that they need to write the child's IEP. Please refer to the Missouri Special Education Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual, indicators 200.330 through 200.590, for details about the reevaluation process.

B4. What are the prescribed DESE transition assessments?

There are no DESE prescribed transition assessments. We suggest that you start with assessments that are given to all children. Then choose assessments based on the student's strengths, interests, experiences, and needs. Starting with a comprehensive assessment can often help lead to more specific assessments. To learn more about transition assessments, please view the Ask the Expert event with Dr. Gary Clark archived on the Missouri online Community of Practice in Transition, www.MissouriTransition.org.

B5. How often should transition assessments be completed? How often can we complete transition assessments?

A student's postsecondary goals have to be based on age-appropriate transition assessment. So you will have to have done some transition assessment before the student turns sixteen and is required to have a transition plan. After that, you should do transition assessment when the team decides it is necessary to get any additional information that they need for transition planning.

B6. As transition assessments are given on an ongoing basis for planning, does an addendum need to be done after a critical assessment report is done, say through VR after the IEP meeting?

You only need an amendment (not called addendum anymore) if it is necessary to change the IEP in any way.

B7. If all freshmen in special education are given the Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) on an individual basis, is parent consent needed?

Yes, if the assessment is not given to all children in a class as part of a course, or to all children at a grade level or in a certain school building or district-wide, then parental consent is needed as this is part of the reevaluation process.

B8. All students complete a transition inventory in a class during the freshman year. Do you need permission to give this same inventory to a student or group of students at the beginning of the sophomore year that were not present when it was given as a freshman?

If the student missed that day, then it could have been administered later during that school year. If the student is a transfer from another district and didn't attend at all last year, then you will need to get consent (through the reevaluation process) if it is being given as an individual assessment – that is, if you are not giving it to every child in that child's class, or grade or building.

B9. As we see, work with, and talk to the students on our caseload through monitoring services and/or during specialized instruction, do we need permission to document this informal interview in which we have discussing interest, preferences, goals?

No, teachers don't need consent to converse with students about their plans for the future during the course of the school day. Teachers often converse with students about their interests and preferences during the course of the day. This type of conversation is not based on a checklist or assessment and does not require consent.

B10. Do you have to have parental consent to do informal transition assessment? How is this different from any assessment classroom teacher does with a class (e.g., FACS - life skills assessments, personal finance – budgeting, money management)?

You need consent to conduct any individual assessment. If the assessment is given to all the kids in a class or grade or building or district-wide, it is not considered an individual assessment. The difference is due to the wording in the Federal Regulations and the comments to the Federal Regulations which specifically exclude assessments that are given to all children in a class, grade or building (unless consent is required for ALL students) from the consent requirements that are applied to individual assessments.

B11. If our district is giving a battery of informal transition assessment to all 9th graders in special education, and we get written permission from parents, should we only be doing this at 3-year reevaluation time?

There is no context outside of the reevaluation process for getting consent for evaluation. If these assessments aren't done as part of a class curriculum or for all the students at a grade level, they should be done in the context of a reevaluation. You don't have to wait for the triennial if the team thinks it needs the information now for transition planning.

B12. If you give a transition inventory to your entire special education class, do you have to get parental permission? You are not singling out one student.

If you are giving it to all students in a class (as part of the class curriculum), you would not need parental consent.

B13. For the 3 year reevaluation, do I need to use a formal assessment on transition or will the informal classroom assessments that I use with my whole class be sufficient?

When the IEP team reviews existing data as part of the reevaluation, the team will document what data they have (gained through assessment measures) in the area of transition planning and then decide if they need additional data for transition planning purposes. The team may decide that they don't need more information to write postsecondary goals or transition services or they may decide that information gained through assessment (formal or informal) is needed.

B14. What methods of gathering information qualify as age-appropriate transition assessment but would NOT have to be done through a reevaluation?

When you are not obtaining information directly from the student, then consent in the context of a reevaluation is not required. Examples of such assessment may include:

- Parent interviews
- Teacher surveys
- Behavior Observations
- Situational Assessments
- Observational Rating Scales
- Curriculum-Based Assessments
- Observational Checklists
- Person-Centered Planning
- Environmental Assessments

For more information on these transition assessment methods, please watch the presentation by Dr.

Gary Clark on informal transition assessments <http://itcnew.idahotc.com/st/training/cec/player.html>

B15. If a teacher completes a survey or checklists about a student is parental permission needed?

If the student does not participate in the assessment, it would fall under the category of an observation and consent would not be required.

C. POSTSECONDARY GOALS**C1. How should the postsecondary goals be worded?**

Because the postsecondary goals are the student's goals, they could be worded in the first person. "After graduation, I will complete a degree in early childhood education." It is also acceptable to use third person, "After graduation, Joey will earn a welding certificate through coursework at a vocational-technical school." For younger students, this specificity may be difficult to obtain. If a student wants to attend college but is unsure of a major, the postsecondary goal might state, "Upon completion of high school, I will enroll in courses at a community college." There are also students who do not plan to pursue postsecondary education. An appropriate goal in postsecondary education/training might state, "After graduation, Tara will complete on-the-job training to expand her duties at the local grocery store to include cash register and deli positions."

C2. On the IEP, how do I document that postsecondary goals are based on age-appropriate transition assessments?

The results of transition assessments can be listed in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. You may also consider including the information with the postsecondary goal such as, "In an interview with Joey on October 3, 2007, he stated that after graduation he will earn a welding certificate through coursework at a vocational-technical school."

Or, you can keep documentation of age-appropriate transition assessment in the student's educational record. If you do not document use of age-appropriate transition assessment in the IEP, make sure to include it with IEPs that you send to the DESE as part of your special education self-assessment during your MSIP review year.

C3. When should we mark NA for the Independent Living postsecondary goal?

Postsecondary goals are required for the areas of Employment and Education or Training and, when appropriate, Independent Living. Independent living includes the skills and knowledge an individual needs to direct his or her life at home and in the community. Transition assessments for independent living could address: (a) home living, (b) household & money management, (c) transportation, (d) community involvement, (e) sexual awareness, and (f) self-advocacy.

The DESE has developed a sample form to help IEP teams decide if a postsecondary goal is needed in the area of independent living. This form can be found at:
http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/Index.html.

After the IEP team discusses the student's transition assessment information, the team can decide if it is appropriate for a student to have a postsecondary Independent Living Goal. If the team decides it is not appropriate for the student to have a postsecondary goal for Independent Living, the implication is that student doesn't need any transition services to reach his or her desired level of independence. If this is the case, then the section for Independent Living on Form C of the State Sample IEP should indicate that the team decided that it is not appropriate for the child to have a postsecondary goal for independent living.

C4. Most students have a goal to live independently in an apartment. They usually, like most recent high school graduates, live at home for a few years with the goal of moving out when they earn enough money. Is it okay to write, "Within three years after graduation, the student will live independently in an apartment"?

Yes, it's okay to write a postsecondary goal that will take a few years after graduation to achieve. Many times a student's employment goal won't be achieved until his/her education/training goal is obtained. If the student's goal is to live independently immediately after graduation, it is also okay to write that. Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the IEP team has determined are necessary to reasonably enable a child to meet his or her postsecondary goals. Schools will not be responsible for the child meeting the postsecondary goal or meeting the postsecondary goal within a certain timeframe. The first thing the team should do is decide whether it is appropriate for the student to have an independent living postsecondary goal. You can use the Independent Living Postsecondary Goal Worksheet to help the team decide. It can be found at: http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/documents/PTGoals.doc. If the team decides that an Independent Living postsecondary goal is appropriate then they should provide services to get the child ready to live independently whether they think the child will move out right away or not.

C5. If independent living is not a necessary postsecondary goal, how is that documented?

You could put "N/A" but best practice is to include a statement describing why the team decided an independent living postsecondary goal is not appropriate.

C6. Are terms such as “will explore” or “plans” acceptable in a postsecondary goal?

If the “exploring” and “planning” are happening in high school then it is not really a measurable postsecondary goal. Best practice is to say what the student will do after high school.

C7. How do you address transition when a student changes their postsecondary goal as a senior? What if it is impossible to properly prepare them to meet their postsecondary goal?

Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the team has determined are necessary to prepare the child to meet the child’s postsecondary goals. If the child changes his or her mind, the team should react by reviewing the IEP and then deciding if any IEP revisions are needed. If the team decides that it needs to revise the IEP, then it should determine what services are needed and provide them in the time they have left before graduation.

C8. How do you address transition when the student is unmotivated and has no career/employment postsecondary goals – no idea what they want to do after high school?

Get the family involved, talk with friends, use transition assessment, do the best you can to teach the child employment skills and other skills that will benefit them after they leave high school. You have to have a transition plan.

D. TRANSITION SERVICES**When using the DESE model form C, does there have to be a service listed under school, student, and parent to be in compliance?**

No, minimum compliance only requires that one service be listed under each postsecondary goal. If only one service is listed, this is typically listed as the school’s responsibility.

D1. If sections don’t apply on the transition page, can they be left blank (i.e., outside agency)?

You can write “NA” or “referral to an outside agency is not appropriate” in that section. Best practice is to note why a section is left blank.

E. COURSES OF STUDY**E1. Can the 4-year plan be attached to the IEP and used for the course of study?**

Yes, a 4-year plan can be attached to the IEP, and the course of study can state, “See 4-year plan.” It is important that the 4-year plan include a detailed list of courses, including specific courses that will help the student reach his/her postsecondary goals. If the courses are not uniquely titled (e.g. Algebra I is a unique title, but Math or Life Skills is not), then additional information on the course content should be included either in the 4-year plan or in the course of study section on Form C.

E2. On a 4-year plan, if the student is in 9th grade, do all 4 years have to be filled out?

Yes, the coursework for the student’s current grade as well as the anticipated coursework through the student’s anticipated exit year should be listed. Here is what the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards & Indicators say:

200.800.f. The transition services include courses of study that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate their movement from school to post-school.

200.800.f.(1) The course of study (or courses) listed align with the student’s identified postsecondary goal(s).

200.800.f.(2) The courses of study are multi-year description of coursework from the

student's current grade to anticipated exit year that is designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goal(s).

E3. Do we have to list past coursework taken (if not attaching a 4-year plan) if they are an upper classman?

No, refer to standard cited above. You are required to list classes being taken in the current grade through the anticipated exit year.

E4. Can the multi-year course of study be one "plan" that is not categorizing under "education/training," "employment," and "independent living"?

When using the DESE model Form C, you can either use the spaces provided on Form C and group courses under the postsecondary goal they support OR you can attach a four-year plan. You do not have to identify the courses that are related to each postsecondary goal, but it should be clear that there are courses related to each postsecondary goal. The IEP team may choose to identify the courses related to each postsecondary goal to ensure that all postsecondary goals are being addressed.

E5. Do courses that the student is taking during the present IEP year that relate to a postsecondary goal need to be highlighted if using a 4-year plan?

No, courses on a 4-year plan do not have to be highlighted, but the plan should identify which year the courses will be taken. If the IEP team chooses to do this through highlighting or color-coding, that is fine.

E6. Is it acceptable to list Life Skills Math for each year on the 4-year plan?

If a course does not have a course curriculum, knowledge, performance, or alternate standards associated with it, it is recommended that the course of study list the standards that will be covered during each academic year. This will help ensure that the student continues to move toward his/her postsecondary goals.

F. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

F1. What should be included in the Summary of Performance?

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a provision of IDEA that requires the local education agency to provide a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance for all students exiting school with a standard diploma or exceeding the age of eligibility (21) for FAPE. The summary should include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her postsecondary goals. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a. The DESE has developed a sample SOP form that can be downloaded at http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/allspecedforms.html.

F2. Do you give the Summary of Performance to the student or the parents?

Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.b. It says "student" in the standards, and most of the time you will provide it to a student who has reached the age of majority, but there will be exceptions to this rule. If a child graduates with a regular diploma before the age of 18 the SOP would have to be provided to the parents because the child is not yet his or her own educational decision maker. If parents have obtained legal guardianship for a child through a court of competent jurisdiction so that they retain educational decision making rights after the child turns 18, then the

SOP would have to be provided to the parents. It is recommended that you encourage the student to share the SOP information with parents/guardians who will be assisting in the transition process. Students should also understand how the information can be used to access services and accommodation in postsecondary settings.

F2. When do we give the Summary of Performance to the student?

The summary must be provided to the student not more than 60 days before or 30 days after the child is graduating with a regular diploma or turning 21. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a and 200.1320.c or 200.1320.d.

F3. What if the school sent the student the Summary of Performance 30 days before graduation and then the student failed to graduate?

As far as compliance is concerned, the school would just have to provide the summary again (updated, of course) when the child actually graduates. If a student is on the cusp, it might be easier for the school to wait until graduation is official to provide the SOP rather than possibly having to provide and then update the SOP if the student take longer to graduate than expected.

G. ANNUAL IEP GOALS**G1. When writing SMART IEP goals, is it assumed that the timeline for completion will be by the end of the IEP cycle?**

You can specify a duration for an annual measurable goal that is different from the annual dates of the IEP, but typically the duration coincides with the annual IEP dates. That is the “attainable” part of SMART goals. You should make sure that your annual goals meet all the criteria outlined in the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators, see Indicator 200.810.

G2. Does the baseline of each annual IEP goal need to be documented?

Baseline is not a requirement for annual measurable IEP goals, but best practices is to document the student’s current performance (baseline). It can be included in the Present Levels, in the annual goal comments section, or in the annual goal itself.

H. PLACEMENT AND MINUTES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**H1. If a student is only being serviced in class-within-a-class classes, no resource (study skills), how is that shown on placement?**

Specialized instruction provided in a co-teaching classroom is not considered time removed from general education. 100% in general education is in the “inside regular education at least 80% of time” placement category.

H2. Do class-within-a-class (CWC) classes need to have minutes on the service summary page and do you show that on placement?

When a child with a disability is in a CWC classroom because the IEP team decided that the CWC is the appropriate place for the child to receive special education services (not just by chance through scheduling) then the service summary page should list the amount of specialized instruction to be provided in that setting. When the special education service is provided in the general education setting it does not count as time removed from general education.

H3. How do you document paraprofessionals support when they are not designated individual aides for a student, but service only one student?

The IEP should reflect the paraprofessional services under supplementary aids and services for any amount of time the IEP team determined this service is needed for the child. That would include services from a one-on-one paraprofessional the team has determined necessary and could include time from a paraprofessional that also works with other students in the class if the team determined that dedicated time was needed for that paraprofessional to work with this child (individually or in a group) for a particular amount of time daily, weekly etc. to address the annual goals. If a paraprofessional is working in a classroom and a child with an IEP gains incidental benefit from this, it would not be reflected on the IEP. The key factor is whether the team determined that paraprofessional services were necessary, and for what period of time, to implement this IEP and that amount of time would need to be dedicated to working with the child as indicated in accordance with the IEP.

I. HIGHLY-QUALIFIED TEACHERS**I1. If a student is MR and needs Life Skills English and/or Math, can the special education teacher teach this for all four years or do they need to be certified in each of those areas to be a highly qualified teacher?**

If the child is graduating by earning required credits (that means the teacher is giving the child a grade for an English or math credit, or the like) then the teacher has to meet the highly qualified teacher criteria outlined in the Missouri State Plan for Special Education for that subject area.

J. SPECIFIC TRANSITION SCENARIOS**J2. Postsecondary goals are required for both areas: education/training and employment. In some scenarios, it makes sense, but in others it may not. For example: Johnny plans to go into the military, and he wants a military career. What would his education/training and employment postsecondary goals be?**

His employment postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will enlist in the military. (This is an appropriate employment aspiration.)
His postsecondary education/training postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will complete basic training in the military.

J3. What would be appropriate postsecondary education and employment goals for a student who wants to become a teacher?

You could write two separate postsecondary goals for education/training and employment, or you could write a combination postsecondary goal and list it for both postsecondary goals: Sue will complete college and become employed as a teacher. (The DESE model Form C is not conducive to writing “combination” goals.)

J4. What would be appropriate postsecondary education/training and employment goals for a student who will go to work on the family farm upon graduation?

Employment: After graduation, ‘student’ will work full-time on his family’s farm.

Training: After graduation, ‘student’ will participate in on-the-job training on the family farm to learn [independent operation of a combine, buying and selling crops, etc.]. When writing transition

services, this would be a good opportunity to help the child explore the training/education options that are available to him or her.

J5. How do you write a postsecondary goal when the student's dream is unattainable or unreasonable?

Involving a student in the IEP process and interpreting transition assessment can often help the student identify attainable postsecondary goals. Sometimes the IEP team also has to think creatively as they strive to include postsecondary goals that take into consideration the student's desires and write a meaningful transition plan that will prepare the student for life after high school. The following is a goal from the DESE's example IEP for "Katie," a mild MR student: *Upon graduation from high school, I (Katie) will take a first aid class at the community college and continue on-the-job training.*

Katie's transition plan shows that she will attend college, but she is a senior and has not been taking college preparatory courses. This IEP identifies creative thinking in creating a plan that leads Katie toward her postsecondary goal but does so in a realistic manner.

Dr. Ed O'Leary, who is a leader in the field of postsecondary transition training, recommends that the IEP team should follow-up with a line of questions when they believe the student's postsecondary goal is unreasonable. Use the "wh" questions:

Why do you want to do that? Where do you want to be? What do you like about that job? A student who wants to be a veterinarian probably doesn't want to complete seven or eight years of college. He or she may enjoy working with animals and knows that is what a veterinarian does. When that student learns about all the other occupations in the area of animal care, he or she is likely to find one that is a better fit.

J6. Is this an example of a SMART goal? Katie will move from dependently identifying coins to independently identifying coins by the next IEP.

You should make sure that your goals meet all the criteria outlined in the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators. See indicator 200.810. A SMART goal has to be strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented and time-bound. In this example, the annual goal is evidently attainable for her; it is results oriented because it talks about her moving to an independent action; and it is time-bound (by the next IEP). This goal does not include the strategic part or how it is measurable. You could add a little to the goal: *When given 10 coins, Katie will move from dependently identifying 8 out of 10 coins to independently identifying 8 out of 10 coins by the next IEP.*